

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

MAY 14 1947

U. S. Department of Agriculture

OTWELL IRIS FIELDS

CARLINVILLE, ILLINOIS



Flowers such as these may grow in your garden. Gardens are precious things to be greatly cherished both in mind and heart for they can take us from the day's doubts and uncertainties into a magic realm where we may be restored and refreshed.

Our iris-growing began as a simple experiment in landscaping. Now after thirty years of developing and perfecting the iris we are more convinced than ever before of their value as a landscaping and garden flower—suited to a wide variety of needs in outdoor plantings. Otwell iris, originated by the late Will B. Otwell, for many years a successful nurseryman and horticulturalist, are now known and grown in every state in the Union as well as in many foreign lands.

American iris growers have introduced new colors into the iris world and have clarified and brightened some of the older colors. By so doing iris now have a far greater garden value than they ever had in former years.

We have added to our catalog many of the best iris known to the iris world. We hope that you will become acquainted with these masterpieces of irisdome in a garden of your own.

MRS. W. B. OTWELL,
Carlinville, Illinois.

IRIS CULTIVATION

Iris can be planted any time that the ground isn't frozen, preferably, however, from mid-summer to late fall—just so they root well before freezing weather. Set the rhizomes ten to twenty inches apart, depending on the amount of room that you have and be sure that they are planted—not too deep but planted with roots spread and tops cut off fan-wise. Firm each plant by stepping on each side of it, to tighten it in the ground, after a small amount of dirt has been thrown toward the plant with a hand plow. It is advisable to soak the rhizomes a few moments before planting as shipments must be packed dry to reach you in good condition. Rhizomes may also be watered after planting until the roots are well established and new growth appears above the original fans. This growth may take about thirty days, depending upon the season and the variety of iris planted. Never allow water to stand on the iris as iris do not like wet feet. The other great enemy of iris is bluegrass. Give shallow cultivation for grass and weeds before either reach any size.

Iris will grow in any soil. Mix the soil with some sand for drainage. Fertilizers are not especially needed except when making an entire new flower bed. Then work in one part sand, one part well-rotted manure and one part wood or coal ashes. For the best results re-set your plant oftener—every three to four years anyway.

Mulch new set iris with corn fodder or straw in the late fall. Place a few shovels full of dirt on the mulch at intervals to keep it from blowing off in the winter time. Mulching protects new set plants from root breakage due to freezing and thawing. The iris tops form a natural mulch for the older plants and unless your plants are diseased should remain on until the following Spring when they may be removed by hand or by raking them off. It is advisable, however, to cut off all bloom stalks, with knife or sickle just after the blooming season. This allows the growing strength of the flower to go to the rhizome instead of to the seed pod which forms just below the flower. The rhizomes produce, of course, the same flower, while the seed, if allowed to develop, produces another flower altogether.

If the season is wet and drainage poor you may encounter iris rot. Re-set the rhizomes after scraping off the rot and sunning them for a few days. They may also be dipped in powdered sulphur before re-planting.

Remember, too, that not all varieties of iris have the same sized rhizomes or do they grow just alike. All iris should bloom the first year after planting but this is determined by the variety and conditions under which they are grown.

Mrs. W. B. Otwell

IRIS AS A CUT FLOWER

Interest in the iris is increasing in the United States. This flower has developed tremendously in the last one hundred years. It is the most original and distinct flower of the temperate zone . . . the flower of individuality. It increases readily, flowers generously, easily adapting itself to its surroundings.

Iris as a cut flower has great possibilities. Contrary to the general belief, it can be arranged in endless attractive ways and merits as much care in this respect as is accorded to other varieties of flowers. No flower, least of all the iris, should be placed haphazardly in vase or jar. In arranging large jars full, use the full length stem and put one flower in at a time. Do not crowd as you will lose the charm and symmetry of each flower stalk. Bouquets should be made of one color or of flowers of the same intensity of color rather than of flowers of great contrast.

Iris may be made into smaller bouquets for table use. If no table or border type iris are available for this purpose carefully remove a few buds and float them in a shallow bowl which has enough surface to display the flower when it is open. Cut a few tips of leaves to complete this arrangement. No matter what arrangement you wish to use always cut your flowers in the morning and allow to remain out of water an hour or so before use. This makes them easier to handle as they are less brittle. Always pick off curled buds, giving the fresh buds a better chance to open. And in selecting flowers to cut, choose those with a generous supply of buds.

As a flower for personal wear the iris vies with the orchid for attractiveness. Its wide color range makes it a valuable accessory to any costume.

FINE IRIS VARIETIES

Apricot—The name describes the color of this fine iris. 60c.

At Dawning—A fresh pink and gold blend. 60c.

Beowulf—A red brown blend. 40c.

Black Douglas—A rich deep violet self, almost black. 40c.

Black Wings—A deep midnite blue. 40c.

Blue Velvet—A rich deep blue self. Velvety. 30c.

Burning Bronze—Reddish bronze. Standards a light red, falls are a coppery red. 50c.

Calcutta—A well shaped iris. Coconut brown. 60c.

California Gold—A fine golden iris—a superb flower. 40c.

Cheeric—A brilliant red iris. A fine grower. 40c.

Christabel—A superb red iris of exquisite form and texture. 75c.

City of Lincoln—A giant gold-red iris. \$1.75.

Claribel—A large white iris edged with blue. 50c.

Copper Lustre—A coppery-gold blend. 75c.

Coronation—A fine heavy flowering golden iris. Fragrant. 35c.

Coronet—A large gold iris tinged with rose. 50c.

Crystal Beauty—A pure white iris. Unequalled in size and texture. 35c.

Dauntless—A fine red self. Single plants sold for \$35 a few years ago. 35c.

Dogrose—A superb, tall pink self. A compact flower of exquisite texture. 40c.

Dore—A yellow and cream bi-color. Very attractive. 35c.

E. B. Williamson—A glowing coppery red. A most magnificent iris. Lustrous finish. Rare. \$1.50.

Elkhart—A large chestnut red iris. Very beautiful. 50c.

Ella Winchester—A rich mahogany red iris. Medium height. Blooms very freely. 50c.

Elmohr—A colossal wine red iris. \$4.00.

Eros—A beautiful salmon pink self. Absolutely different and beautiful in any bouquet. 40c.

Ethelwyn Dubuar—Medium pink iris. 50c.

Folkwang—A truly different iris. Lilac tinged standards and iris pink falls. Very fragrant. Long blooming season. 40c.

Fragonard—A soft, lustrous old rose. 40c.

Frieda Mohr—Standards a lilac pink, falls a lilac rose. 35c.

Golden Flare—A blend of Talisman rose shades with a faint blue flush on the falls. 35c.

Golden Hind—Deepest pure yellow. 50c.

Grace Sturtevant—A rich brownish red and carmine iris. 40c.

Grand Canyon—A bronze blend. 75c.

Gudrun—A huge pure white iris well balanced as to standards and falls. Early. 40c.

Happy Days—A deep yellow self. Large compact flowers. 50c.

Indian Chief—An outstanding red bi-color. Standards are fawn, falls a brilliant red. 35c.

Jasmania—A rich banana yellow. 35c.

Jerry—A very desirable red iris. Medium height. 50c.

Junaluska—Given the Award of Merit by the American Iris Society. The standards are rose with a golden blend. The falls are a vivid velvety carmine. The flowers are large, of heavy substance and perfectly formed. 75c.

Khorasan—A brown red variegata. 60c.

FINE IRIS VARIETIES

- Lighthouse**—A brilliant flame colored flower with rose falls. Extremely beautiful and unusual. \$1.00.
- Lilamani**—A large velvety deep purple, almost black. 50c.
- Marco Polo**—Standards are a lustrous rose. Falls are crimson. 40c.
- Marisha**—A lovely pink blend. \$1.00.
- Marquita**—A cream colored iris. Pink markings. 60c.
- Matula**—An apricot buff blend. \$1.00.
- Miss California**—A stately pink iris. 60c.
- Missouri**—A beautiful medium blue self. 60c.
- Morrocco Rose**—An unusually large pink iris. \$1.50.
- Mrs. Marion Cran**—A tall and lovely ruffled pink iris. 35c.
- Naranja**—A beautiful gold iris with burnt orange overlay. 40c.
- Nylon**—A large copper-tan self. \$1.50.
- Otwell's Sky Blue**—A beautiful heavenly blue iris. Tall, strong and fragrant. Long blooming season. 35c.
- Piute**—A rich red tone self. 50c.
- Pluie d'or**—A fine deep gold self. Excellent to use with bouquets of pastel shades. 35c.
- Prairie Sunset**—An exquisite blend of rose and copper. \$3.50.
- Radiant**—Bronze and coppery red. \$1.00.
- Rameses**—Winner of Dykes medal. A rich blend of pink and bronze. 35c.
- Rebellion**—A deep glowing blood red. \$1.50.
- Red Dominion**—A fine rich, all red iris. General effect is dark. Medium height. 35c.
- Ruby Perry**—A light cerise pink self. Tall and exquisitely beautiful. 35c.
- Sandalwood**—An interesting brown blend. 40c.
- Selene**—A large silvery white iris with frilled standards. 35c.
- Shining Waters**—A large blue iris. 40c.
- Sha Jehan**—Standards are a soft creamy buff, falls are a rich plum velvet bordered with white. 50c.
- Shiwassee**—Large and early red iris. 35c.
- Sierra Blue**—Stately giant blue. 40c.
- Sir Launcelot**—Standards are a soft fawn, falls a brownish claret. 40c.
- Spokan**—A beautiful red brown iris of good size and texture. 35c.
- Tiffany**—A yellow rose plicata. 60c.
- Trails End**—Bittersweet red. Standards are a beautiful blend. 35c.
- Wabash**—Standards are white, falls are a rich blue edged in white. Exquisite. \$1.00.
- War Eagle**—Large raspberry red self. 40c.
- Winneshiek**—A violet iris bordered with lighter shades of violet. 40c.

I am offering one collection this year. It consists of many fine varieties which I do not have in sufficient quantity to offer outside of a collection. It will include ten fine varieties which will vary with each collection hence making it impossible to list the kinds. This collection will be sent to you tax paid and post paid anywhere in the United States for \$4.00. These iris are large rhizomes which are guaranteed to bloom the succeeding year. They are sure to please you.

THE IRIS IN LANDSCAPING AND GENERAL GARDENING

There is nothing lovelier in the garden than iris. Planted alone or in combination with other flowers such as columbine, peonies or delphinium it is unusually beautiful.

Iris as any other flower should be planted so that it will be the center of interest itself and not used merely to enhance the general effect. Whatever site is used for planting the carrying quality of the iris in question must be considered. There is little danger of wrong color combinations in iris plantings providing enough lighter iris as gold, yellow, white or ivory shades are included to give sufficient contrast to the darker and more brilliant shades. It is well to remember that with the bi-colors there is always less display as the darker falls are lost against shadows. Light shades carry well and add brilliance and beauty to your plantings. Dark shades should always be placed in foregrounds where their colors can be enjoyed close at hand.

It is well to plant with the matured height of the flower in mind. This and the proper setting for your plantings is more important than to plant according to color scheme. Colors often arrange themselves better than hours devoted to this purpose can achieve. Green lawns, green trees, evergreen trees, a dark row of tree trunks, a dark wall or foundation all make a good foil for growing iris. Mass plantings of the same color make a fine showing. Fewer plants of many kinds placed in one bed are more dependent upon their background for proper display. The green foliage of some iris continue after the blooming season to furnish beauty to driveways, hill side and erosion plantings.

Anything which grows is more beautiful to look at than anything which is built. Flowers, of all growing things touch the heart most profoundly. Not many realize the important improvements made in iris growing within the past few years, both as to size and color. Your valuable garden space should be reserved for some of the newer, finer sorts. We need beauty in our present day world and we need flowers that take the minimum of care and cultivation. Order some of these fine flowers now if you want to avoid disappointment in securing some of the most attractive kinds that grow.



WHAT OUR FRIENDS SAY

My flowers have bloomed. They were lovely—and it confirmed my thought that iris is the flower to collect. I became so excited when they were all in bloom that I decided that I wanted more, even though I have already bought a great many varieties from you.—Oklahoma.

My Shiwassee, large, red iris has done so well that everybody marvels at its size and beauty and color. I would like to get more iris.—Illinois.

I believe it was thirteen years ago that I got some iris collections from the Otwell Iris Gardens. During that time I have had bulbs from other places and many have come and gone, but the Otwell iris have thrived and have grown all over the place. Incidentally all the iris obtained from your place bloomed the first year whereas we have had to wait two and three years before getting blossoms from bulbs which we have bought from other firms.—Pennsylvania.

I am certainly proud of the iris plants you sent me. If I had known they would be such fine plants I would have ordered more. I never did get plants like yours for the money. I can't forget those lovely iris you sent. They are growing already.—Illinois.

I have found your iris so beautiful and fragrant always I would like to add some more of them to my collection.—Washington, D.C.

I believe one of the best ways to help solve life's problems is working with flowers . . . I wish I could see all of your iris as well as those of yours I have here in my garden.—Illinois.

Most all of the iris I have came from your field. I have had fine success with them but this year the blossoms were much larger and more of them opened at once with six to nine buds on each stem and three or four opening at once on a row sixty feet long. It made a wonderful showing and many of the townspeople enjoyed them, too, and that of course made me happy.—Connecticut.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We grow no flowers but iris but we grow them by the thousands. We specialize particularly in red and pink iris. We ship only the best developed and finest stock which is sure to please you. We guarantee the iris to be true to name. We do not guarantee growth in your garden. If plants do not arrive in good condition return them at once and adjustment will be made. Any error on our part will be carefully corrected.

For real iris beauty plant fewer kinds and more of each kind if you wish to make the best showing. Add one or two of several extra kinds each year to your orders. Plant them in a trial flower bed and watch them. Perhaps you will want a supply of them the following year. This method of choosing new kinds is far more satisfactory than buying from colored pictures in a catalog. I have never seen any color reproduction of iris that was true to the real flower.

Look over our list and see if some of our iris do not meet your requirements. Each iris you receive will be labeled. To save time, correspondence and possible disappointment enclose a list of second choices of iris when ordering, in case some of your particular selections are no longer available. All orders are filled in the order in which they are received. All orders of \$4.00 or more will be shipped to you post paid at prices quoted in this catalog. For all orders under \$4.00 please add twenty-five cents to your total bill for postage and packing charges. Prices in other catalogs are not effective. Order only from the current list as many older varieties are sold out. No C.O.D. orders will be accepted at all.

Please send cash with your order, either a post office money order or your own personal check will be acceptable. If it is the shipping season I will not acknowledge your order by letter but will send your order to you at once. Should there be a short delay, be patient—don't write. It may have rained here thus hindering our digging operations slightly. All shipments are dug to order and not ahead of time. Order any time and your shipment will be sent to you at the best time for planting. July to November are good planting months. We will make no shipments until after the blooming season. Shipping generally begins about July 1.

Be sure to write us your full name and address with care. Do not abbreviate and print if you can not write plainly. We ship gift orders postpaid anywhere in the United States. Please enclose your personal gift card to include in these orders.

We take this opportunity to thank you for your friendship and patronage through the years. We shall continue to strive to merit your confidence and approval.

Sincerely,

MRS. W. B. OTWELL.